



SUPERINTENDENT'S 90-DAY ENTRY PLAN

Immediate Focus

The purpose of this plan is to establish a set of activities that will fully immerse Dr. Cheryl L. H. Atkinson in the workings of the DeKalb County School District, the communities and external structures that provide support. All executive leadership transition is critical, and it is particularly true in this case where student achievement has decreased and other critical issues have recently been exposed that require urgent action. These activities are designed to enable the new Superintendent to gather information quickly about the community and the organization. This time also presents an opportunity for the development and communication of the message and purpose of the new Superintendent's administration.

To that end, the Superintendent must:

- Establish a strong community presence promptly
- Assess the organization's strengths and weaknesses
- Identify critical issues facing the District
- Correct weaknesses and build on strengths
- Create a network of contacts and resources
- Engage stakeholders in mutual transformation and accountability

There are five guiding principles that must be followed in decision-making. The first and most important principle is *Students First*. Student achievement is our business and must be the central theme in all initiatives. A standard belief that must exist in every school is that parents are our partners. It is our responsibility to include and value their input into their children's education and school. Victory is in the classroom; daily teaching and learning is where the battle for improvement in student achievement is fought. Keys to success are leadership and accountability; therefore, each school and department must have a strong leader. It takes the entire community to ensure the success of the District, and we must tap into the knowledge, skills, and support they can offer to assist in providing a quality education for all students.



The overall objective of the entry plan is to listen, learn, and lead. The entry plan has three distinct phases which encompasses business work days:

Phase I: Pre-Entry (9 days)

September 1 – September 14

- Begin Personnel Audit (Central Office Staff)

Phase II: Entry (50 days)

September 15 – November 23

- Continue Personnel Audit
- Begin Program Audits (Divisions/Departments)

Phase III: Development of Action Plan (31 days)

November 28 – January 24

- Develop *Excellence for Education Plan*

The final phase of the entry plan is to develop and present to the Board of Education and community the *Excellence for Education Plan* which will be the explicit and tactical strategy to improve the achievement of all students, internal operations, reporting, and accountability systems. The *Excellence for Education Plan* will also serve to actualize and prioritize the levers necessary to deliver a balanced scorecard and an aligned management system that reiterates our core values and mission. The *Excellence for Education Plan* will become an essential and critical guiding document for continuous improvement.

Listening and learning sessions will dominate the early stages of Phases I and II. These sessions will consist of numerous meetings with constituent groups, internal leadership groups, and direct reports, as well as external leaders and members of business, service, not for profit, philanthropic, political, and community organizations of all kind.

It should be noted that the work of entry occurs simultaneously with the responsibility for operations of the District. The obvious duties of day-to-day operations and problem solving are addressed while entry takes place.

The set of activities and their primary purpose are as follows:

District/Site Tour

Purpose: To understand the District's geographic size and survey distances.

- Visit each school in the District
- Hold principal "one-on-one" academic conferences



- Host “fire-side chats” with teachers and school-based staff for personal communication about critical issues facing our organization
- Meet with each Area Assistant Superintendent to discuss the results of each school performance
- Ride school bus routes throughout the District

Board of Education

Purpose: To establish strong team-oriented working relationships with each individual board member and the Board as a whole.

- Schedule meeting with Board Chair to discuss a framework, dates, and format for two Board retreats
- Secure a facilitator, schedule and conduct retreats
- Establish regular meeting times with the Board Chair and Vice Chair for reviewing Board agendas, etc.
- Schedule an individual meeting with each Board Member
- Establish regular communication systems with the Board

Parents & Community Leadership

Purpose: To meet with parents and community members to establish good will, build support, and establish communication channels.

- Schedule and hold parent round table meetings around the county
- Identify and schedule community leaders, professional organizations and affiliations for an initial listening and learning session, and establish a routine communication protocol with these groups
- Schedule meetings with the established parent organizations for initial listening and learning sessions
- Schedule meetings with the established student leadership organizations for initial listening and learning sessions



Political Leadership

Purpose: To meet local and state elected officials and establish means for consistent communication.

- Meet with the CEO, County Commissioners, Mayors, Legislative Delegation, other government officials to establish regular meetings and an acceptable format for ongoing communication regarding district's needs; establish accountability protocols and work plans for mutually agreed upon areas of interest

• Meet with the State Superintendent and other appropriate GADOE staff

- Meet with the Chamber of Commerce, business partners, local colleges/university presidents, faith-based, civic, community, and professional education organizations
- Meet with the District's legal counsel and legislative liaisons to review legislative action efforts at the local, state, and national level

Media

Purpose: To clearly articulate the vision early so that the public, press, and educational community know what to expect and to demonstrate seriousness of purpose to transform DeKalb Schools into a world-class education enterprise.

- Hold meetings with the media and offer to meet with the editorial boards of all local media partners to establish routine communication and meeting protocols
- Be accessible, a good listener and build relationships of trust
- Secure an external organization to conduct a communications audit
- Ensure that the Media understands they are welcome and that mutual communication and reporting is open
- Increase media exposure that emphasizes the District's strengths through invites to key significant events



District Organization Structure

Purpose: To determine the District's direction for division, department, and direct reports within the organization to ensure a student achievement focused agenda.

- Request resumes, job descriptions, and list of major projects from all departments and central office personnel during pre-entry
- Meet with Senior Staff and Cabinet to establish clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, expectations, accountability, and initiate program and personnel quality performance reviews
- Identify key staff to assist with the transition within the organization and hire critical new team members to join Executive and Senior Staff
- Meet with all division heads to assess district and departmental capacity for effectiveness and efficiency of services:

Curriculum & Instruction
Human Resources
School Operations
Student Support Services
Capital Development

Finance
Communications
Facilities & Maintenance
Transportation
Information Technology

- Review, assess, and reorganize the central organizational structure to enhance effectiveness and maximize service delivery to the school site
- Review all accreditation reports and commissioned studies by outside agencies
- Review funding streams supporting each area of district operations and redirect as appropriate to enhance service delivery at the school site

CULMINATION OF THE PLAN

Upon successful completion of the activities in this plan, the Superintendent will report to the Board of Education a summary outlining findings and proposed plans at the second Board-Superintendent retreat in January. This will enable the Board-Superintendent team to create, revise, and/or adjust the direction of the District and modify the individual and District goals in the Superintendent's evaluation.